

Growing youth work in Europe

Research findings from the study
“Mapping European youth work ecosystems”

Frederike Hofmann-van de Poll

Dragan Atanasov

Goals and Methodology

Study “Mapping European Youth Work Ecosystems”

□ Who? What? With whom? How?

- **Aim**: contribute to the deeper understanding of European youth work by
 - identifying European actors active in implementing the EYWA
 - identifying their initiatives, programmes and projects
 - analysing interactions, synergies and overlaps between them

Methodology

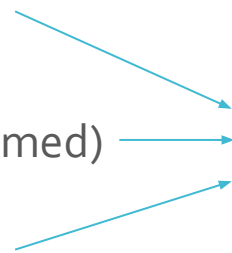
Desk research

Interviews

(ESG – EYWC – named)

Observation

Analysis → Validation → Report



Main findings

- What is: the European Youth Work Ecosystem
- What should be: the ideal European Youth Work Ecosystem
- Expectations, challenges and visions towards the EYWA
- Conclusions and recommendations

European Youth Work Ecosystem

- Definition: “the complex network of actors - institutions, organisations, agencies, individuals – at European level, which contribute to the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda”
- Actors: European Union; Council of Europe; Governments; civil society
 - Core:
 - Youth Partnership (institutionalised cooperation between the two institutions),
 - European Steering Group representing the Community of Practice,
 - European Service Centre for the Bonn Process at JUGEND für Europa (until November 2023)
- Projects: wide definition (including policy documents, events, bodies, research, projects)
 - European level:
 - policy and framework development
 - Creating spaces for the Community of Practice to meet and discuss
 - Quality development

Expectations - ideal ecosystem

- European institutions
 - Political responsibility of remaining involved
 - Responsibility for and coordination of implementation of EYWA cannot be fully given to the Youth Partnership
 - Proactively engage their bodies and institutions in EYWA
 - Align funding programmes more and explicitly with the EYWA
 - Specific funding streams for projects of the EYWA
 - Exert influence on member states to push for greater implementation at the national level
- National governments
 - Stronger role in initiating processes supporting the EYWA (through events, programs and funding streams)
 - Becoming visibly involved at the European level (for example through monitoring)
 - Take a proactive role in informing, involving and supporting national and local civil society actors
- Civil society (= local youth organisations and youth workers)
 - Take ownership of the implementation on national and local levels
 - Need for intermediary actors to translate and transfer the message of the EYWA, through national and European youth (work) organisations

Expectations towards the EYWA

- Nature of the Bonn Process and its relation to the Agenda to be cleared
- Directions and guidelines provided by the European level (institutions and/or ESG)
- EYWA priority list
- Youth Partnership has the mandate to coordinate and implement EYWA – but does it have the means?
- EYWA should move to the national regional and local level

Challenges

- Extrinsic
 - Overall state of youth work organisations and working conditions of youth workers
 - Due to crises, priorities shift from youth work to other youth policy priorities
- Intrinsic
 - Ambiguity on terms
 - European Youth Work Agenda; Bonn Process; implementation; putting into practice; community of practice vs. community of practitioners
 - Broad definition of the eight thematic priority areas
 - Implementation and accountability
 - Lack of involvement of national and local authorities
 - Lack of ownership by civil society
- European level
 - Discursive differences between EU and Council of Europe
 - Lack of clarity on roles of European institutions and Youth Partnership
 - Debate on the structural level
 - Discontinuation of the European Service Centre for the Bonn Process

Conclusions

- From a mapping of actors, projects and thematic intersections towards a mapping of actors and interactions
- Different understandings between the central actors on what the EYWA is and how it can be coordinated and implemented accordingly
- Actors find it difficult to assign their projects to the EYWA – practice of labelling existing activities
 - Difficult to integrate topics of the EYWA separately into work
 - Difficult to assign projects and measures to a specific area of the agenda.

Recommendations

1. To discuss the nature of the European Youth Work Agenda, reaching a common understanding of its purpose and how it is to be “put into practice”.
2. To discuss a set of key priorities to work on, thus specifying the very broad eight thematic priority areas.
3. To develop a communication plan (or plans, as different groups of stakeholders require different forms of communication) to promote the European Youth Work Agenda, including the outcomes of recommendation 1 and 2.
4. To distinguish between the roles and mandates of different stakeholders.
5. To make more concrete efforts to bring the European Youth Work Agenda to the national, regional and local level.
6. To make more concrete efforts to bring the European Youth Work Agenda to different actors from civil society
7. To ensure the involvement of relevant organisations and institutional bodies that have the potential to support the European Youth Work Agenda and youth work development in general, especially such organisations and institutional bodies that are not directly responsible for youth policy.
8. To ensure more funds, or the better use of existing funds, to support the European Youth Work Agenda and with it, the further development of youth work in Europe.
9. To increase the visibility of the European Union and the Council of Europe within the European Youth Work Agenda by distinguishing and highlighting their efforts at the coordination and steering level on the one hand and the efforts of their subordinate authorities at the executive level on the other.

Contact

Thank you for your attention!

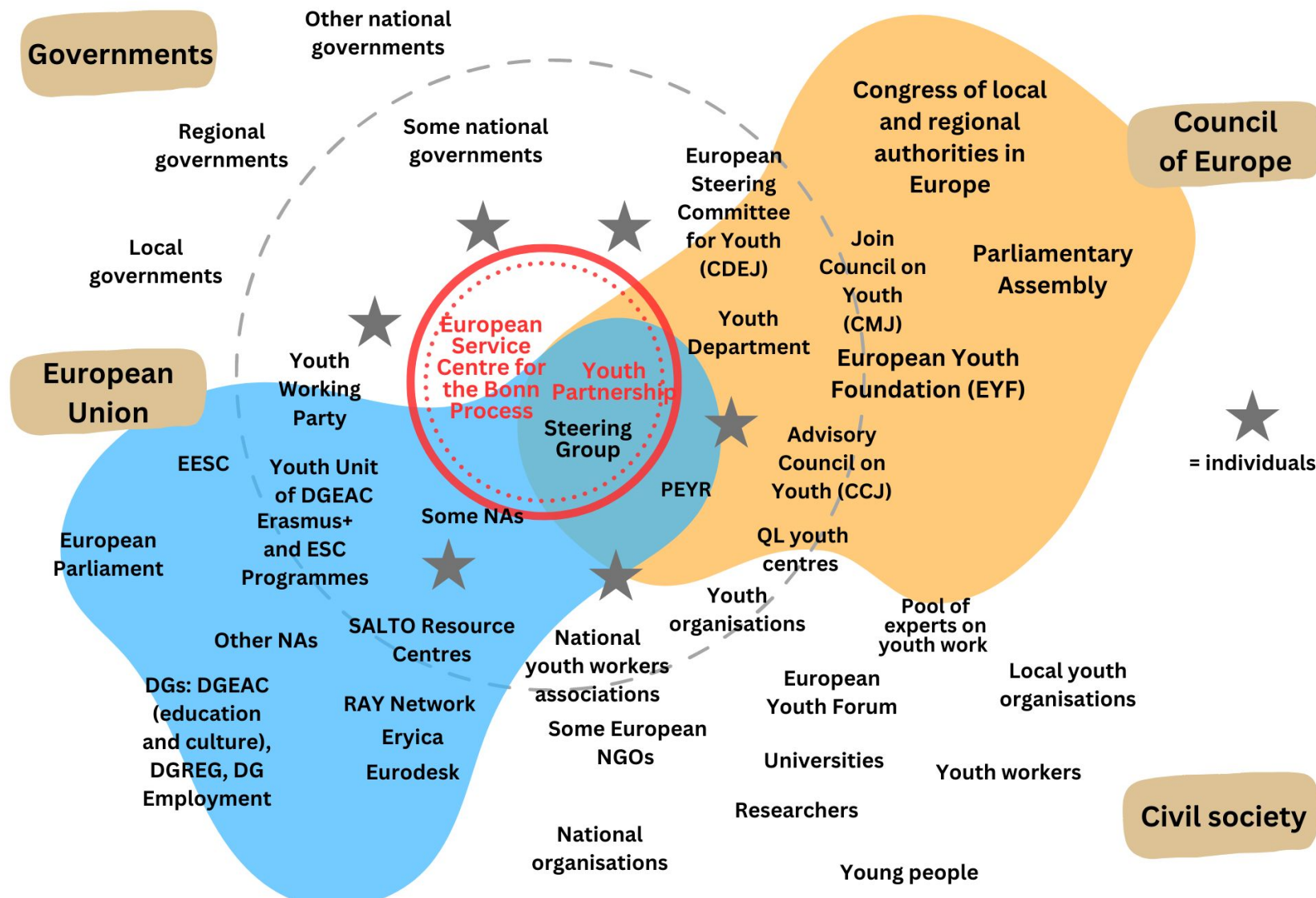
Dragan Atanasov

atanasov.dragan@gmail.com

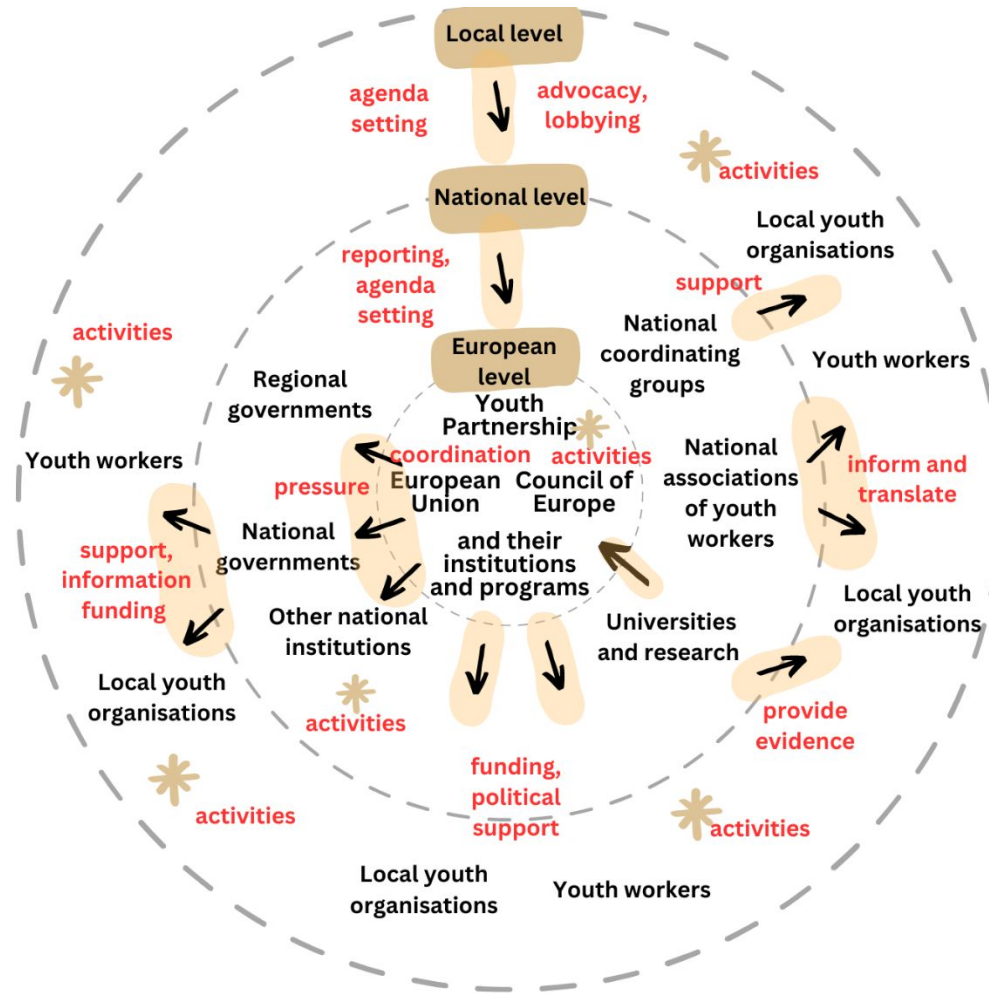
Dr Frederike Hofmann-van de Poll

hofmann.frederike@gmail.com

European Youth Work Ecosystem



ideal European Youth Work Ecosystem



National mapping methodology

The purpose of the national mapping methodology is to provide a systematic overview of the youth work system in a country.

By applying the proposed methods, the researchers will be able to visualise a national youth work ecosystem, including the main actors, relations and interactions between them, as well as the main activities, projects and initiatives related to the eight thematic areas of the European Youth Work Agenda.

From there, the methodology can help identify existing gaps, challenges and opportunities, and recommendations on how to foster youth work development on a national level.

National mapping methodology

1. Desk research to identify key stakeholders
2. Expert interviews
3. Creating a spreadsheet with actors, and what they are working on
4. Visualisation
5. Validation via questionnaire / focus groups with stakeholders
6. Seminar on the ecosystem to identify gaps and opportunities, and next steps
7. Report with recommendations on how to continue with the youth work development